

THE PRELUDE

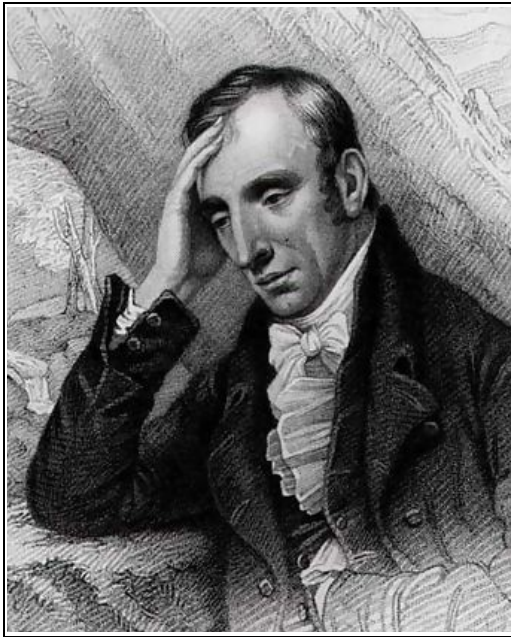
Or, I GET SMARTER:

A POEM ABOUT ME

by William Wordsworth

VOLUME III

Of Fourteen



as Translated Into

Even-More-Boring-And-Trite by

Fast Sedan Nellson,

*MOST EXEMPLARY TRANSLATOR IN THE BORING TRITE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE (EVEN MORE)!!*

Thanks to William Repass
for proofreading, to bring
this admirable translation
into complete alignment
with the first edition.

THE THIRD PART

I LIVE IN CAMBRIDGE

The weather sucked the day we drove
Across the field with clouds above it,
And we were bored until we saw
The Church of King's College which
Was real tall and fancy,
Really really tall, more than the trees.

Driving, we passed
A student who was dressed like a student,
Hurrying like he was in a hurry,¹
Or wanted to exercise outside;
We passed him—and I stared at him
Until he was behind us.
As we got closer,
It seemed to suck us in like a river.²
We kept driving and passed the castle; saw
A bit of the River Cam while we crossed the bridge;³
And got off at the *Hoop*, a famous inn.

I was in a good mood, and hopeful;
I had some friends there, who I knew
And seemed like friends,⁴ typical schoolboys, who now
Were special apparently: in a place
With lots of people I liked, I wandered around;
Questions, directions, warnings and advice⁵
Were given to me by everyone; what a great day
Of being proud and happy! I thought I was
Really important, and went

1 Imagine that!

2 A rare bit of imagery that is interesting enough to resist further simplification in Even-More-Boring-&-Trite translation.

3 As one might expect.

4 On second thought, Wordsworth doesn't seem so sure they were friends after all. But they sure *seemed* like it...

5 This line is in Even-More-Boring-&-Trite in the original.

To all the shops,
And tutors and tailors, wherever,
All over the place without thinking very much.

I was real, they were imaginary; I wandered
Really happy through random stuff;
Stuffy robes, or gaudy, teachers, students, streets,
Yards, walkways, lots of churches, gates, towers:
A crazy vacation for a country boy,
From the north.

Just like
A fairy did it, suddenly
I was rich, and wore
Nice clothes, and silk socks, and my hair
Had powder in it like trees with frost, when frost is cold.⁶
I won't talk about my fancy bathrobe,
Or other stuff that proved I was manly even though
I didn't have to shave.—Weeks passed,
With invitations, dinner parties, wine and fruit,
Being frugal at home, and in public
Spending lots, and looking like a rich bloke.

I stayed in the student halls named after St. John:
It was three really old buildings, and the first one
Was where I lived, and it was little;
The kitchen was below it, and was
Pretty noisy, and sounded uglier than bees,
But just as busy; with shouts
About what to do, and getting mad.
The big noisy Trinity College clock was nearby,
Which never forgot, no matter what time it was,
To say what time it was,⁷ and rang
Twice, high and low.⁸

6 The original has 'rimy' trees, an archaism which Wordsworth apparently forgot was not Boring-and-Trite. It seems that frost is not *always* very cold.

7 Another good example of Wordsworth's astounding ability to notice utterly obvious things.

8 Not Boring-and-trite in the original, but poetic: "twice over with a male and female voice". I have chosen to translate the line directly from Poetic to E-M-B-&-T; if, alternatively, we read Wordsworth's line as Boring-&-Trite (i.e., without fancy-schmancy figurative language), the alternative

The organ that was in there was also in there;
And while I was in bed, at
Night, I could see
The part of the church where there was a statue
Of Newton with his prism and he didn't talk,
A symbol of how he thought
About weird stuff all the time, by himself.⁹

About schoolwork, and the classroom
With as many students
As chairs, who read books,
And lazy students, and rebels,
And honest dumb kids—of important days,
Tests, when they decided
How good you are! Of ridiculous goals,
That made you scared,
Petty jealousy, and good or bad success—
Let people who know more about this stuff talk about it.
I really didn't give a shit about it,
And did poorly. But ever since I got there
In this new place,
I was bothered by responsible ideas,
Hoping for ridiculous stuff,¹⁰ and worries
About getting a job later,
And especially, a really weird feeling in my brain,
Like I wasn't supposed to be there,
Just then. But why care?

translation might be: “rang twice / like a hermaphrodite”; which sounds too interesting to have been Wordsworth's intention—is, in fact, Poetic.

9 Here again, Wordsworth has strayed accidentally into writing interesting poetry, despite his theoretical insistence on being Boring-and-Trite. We can only assume that he was disappointed in his inability to write anything more commonplace and uninteresting than, “Newton with his prism and silent face, / the marble index of a mind forever / Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.” One would almost think we were reading Shelley! I have attempted to render the line as insipid and stupid as Wordsworth wished his work to be (usually with success), though unfortunately the original betrays too much literacy to be properly rendered in E-M-B-&-T.

10 Eight lines ago Wordsworth boasted of *not* “wishing to hope without a hope”, of “excessive hopes”. Like a goldfish, Wordsworth's memory seems to span, on evidence, approximately between four to six iambic pentameter lines (40-60 syllables, when he scans correctly).

Because (in addition to Reason and how it
 Thinks about stuff to make morality
 Really deep, and wanting to go to heaven,
 Which is less important than believing
 In Jesus),¹¹ I came here
 To be kind of like a prophet, and I had holy superpowers
 And super-smartness, to do stuff and feel really deep.¹²
 A lot of the time, when being here
 Bored me, a lot of the time I left
 My friends, and everyone else, and buildings and trees,
 And wandered around in the fields
 A long way from the pretty stuff
 I was used to, my mind
 Still going; but coming back in herself,
 Returning fast was as fresh as before
 At least I recognised for sure
 The way she always was:¹³ Let me dare to speak
 in Philosophical language, say I felt
 How unique my special feelings were,
 To make up for how crappy this place was
 And my being here, even though I'd changed
 Since I was a kid, or *would* change after this.
 As if woken up, called, woken up, held back,¹⁴
 I looked for things that were there forever; looked at
 The ground and the sky:
 Earth, which wasn't ruined anywhere by a bit
 Of the Paradise before God kicked us out;
 And sky, whose beauty and riches are talked about

11 Here again, Wordsworth has unsuccessfully attempted to force Philosophical language into Boring-and-Trite Language, against his own theories; his portrayal of Reason and Christian Faith and Hope as people bowing to each other does not help the situation.

12 Wordsworth is humble, as always.

13 This is garbled and incomprehensible in the original as well; partly due to Wordsworth's inability to handle complex sentence structure, and partly because there is no clue who "she" is; the best guess would be one of the personifications mentioned in the previous footnote. Since these personifications are written in Poetic and cannot be translated into E-M-B-&-T, and since even with them in place this "sentence" is no clearer, I have not left the original in Poetic in the body of my translation.

14 Wordsworth uses two synonyms in one line; apparently he needed an extra syllable and couldn't think of anything else.

By calling it Heaven.
I asked both of them to be my teachers;
Or, thinking about myself,
Read, watched, expected, listened, thought
And thought even more; felt
Like I was carrying really heavy stuff, and seeing
God,
Who doesn't mind Time,
And, because he's immortal
And can do whatever he wants, lives
And is really really great. But anyway! It's enough
To say that I was becoming
So really really smart and spiritual—
Doing something, lots of people already did,
Using perfect metaphors I thought up¹⁵
Or just having a really strong brain.
In all the stuff in nature,
Even gravel,
I saw personality: I could tell they felt things,
Or I imagined it:¹⁶ A ton of it¹⁷
Was in my soul, and everything
I saw meant spiritual stuff.
Plus lots of Fear or Love
Or Beauty, Nature's face changed
By her mood swings, I really
Paid as much attention as water does
To the wind in the same mood
of feeling; did what I was told like a lute
Sitting out in the wind.
Not famous, unpopular, still I was really rich—
The world was still there—It was mine;
I made it, because I'm the only one who understood it,
Except God.
These feelings, once in a while, got noticed
By my acting funny and seeing things you could see:¹⁸
Some people said I was daft—they were right,

15 Philosophical in the original—"analogies".

16 To be fair, a lot of people have trouble using colons correctly.

17 Wordsworth is unclear as to what "it" is.

18 "visible looks" in the original.

If being good at immature fun,
If really serious thinking turned into
Being a genius, can be called that;
If raving about the future is madness; if things seen
By poets in the olden days, and higher up¹⁹
By the first people, the first people,²⁰
Can't be seen anymore in these stupid times
Without being crazy. But anyway,
I wasn't crazy, because my real-life eye
Even when I was working really hard was always
Looking at how things were different
Inside what you could actually see,
Wherever they were, or how big;²¹ an eye
Which, from from a tree, a stone, a dead leaf,
To the ocean and sky
With stars in it,
Couldn't rest anywhere;²²
Which always gave my soul advice,
And by working all the time
Tied up like feelings like in chains.

And here, Mate! I've told you about my life
Really well, and told a story
About stuff that I can definitely call
The glory of my youth. About genius, power,
The universe and holiness itself
I've been blabbing on, because I was talking about
My feelings. Not about real stuff
That anybody knew about, words, clues,
Pictures or actions, but about my heart
I've been rattling on, and my young brain.
Crikey! Powerful souls are so scary,
And what they do inside while they're still

19 It is unclear what is meant here by "higher up".

20 Here again Wordsworth simply uses a pair of synonyms to repeat the exact same thing twice in a line.

21 Philosophical Language in the original—Wordsworth is discussing Neo-Platonic metaphysics.

22 A singular failure on Wordsworth's part to speak 'ordinary language', this line almost reads like real poetry—much to Willie's chagrin, no doubt. It is thus quite difficult to render into E-M-B-&-T

Not used to the real world, that's
Just a field that they're growing in.
This is, actually, a really brave point of view,
This real power, which I wanted to have
At least a little of, but mostly
You can't talk about it.
We all have places in our souls
Where we're alone; I can tell, and
Breath for special powers you can't talk about;
But aren't we each our own memory,²³
And, so, since we have to stop talking about this,
I'm not a total bastard, everybody
Alive feels like they're God sometimes,
And can tell how much greatness we get
From being natural things in Nature.

That's enough: For now we've gotta go down
To a more popular field.²⁴ I'm a Tourist,
Who talks about himself constantly; still,
That's the way it goes, if the pure of heart²⁵ does the same
Really fast, and if you, my special Chum!
Who are always right next to me while I think out loud,
Hold me up, like you've been doing, while I stumble on.

I already said, when my happiness
About seeing all this stuff
Went away, I got self-absorbed again;
Still, I was in a different
Place, and I changed
Pretty slowly.
Constantly quiet and amazing thoughts
Of being lonely turned into mucking about
And stupid hobbies; sometimes
Going through the motions²⁶, but usually fake hopes;

23 This passage is in straightforward Philosophy, although with influences of Poetic Language. It is almost impossible to frame in E-M-B-&-T, thus resulting in the rather garbled translation here.

24 i.e., enough Philosophy—back to Triteness.

25 “Pure of heart” could not be made any more trite than in the original.

26 “forced labour” in the original, but clearly ‘forced’ in the sense indicated by “forced hopes” later in the line. Wordsworth was certainly not about to get a

And, the worst part, a neurosis²⁷
 That made me wishy-washy, and made
 Me think too much.—But still,
 It was pretty cool. Could I see—
 Who, if they were smarter than mud
 In an estuary when the tide's out,
 Could have seen—without being really happy,
 So many kids, so many and pretty
 A group that was starting to be
 Healthy, and want stuff, and be pretty, suddenly
 So many different kinds
 Of kids—could have²⁸ stayed bored while seeing
 That string of assorted flowers²⁹
 All over the school
 That was really famous? To me, anyway,
 It was pretty: because, to tell the truth,
 Even though I knew how to stand up,
 And really unique thoughts made me so happy
 That when I was alone I entranced myself,
 Still I could only be alone
 When I was alone; If there were lots of people around
 I joined them because I wanted to; because my heart
 Liked people, and liked being lazy and happy.

Since I didn't ask people to come with me
 And have fun (in fact, I never,
 Even though I tend to sing to myself,
 Ever talked to myself about having fun with nature,
 Or expected to be able to
 Talk about how great it is),³⁰ it was easy

job.

27 Or “treasonable growth” in the original; in my rendering, I have attempted to remain just as true to Wordsworth's “everyday speech” as he did.

28 Wordsworth suddenly remembers he's still in the middle of a sentence, but gets his syntax a bit jumbled. Another example of his genius for plain-speak: For if a “common man” were to attempt in “everyday speech” a sentence as long and contorted as this one turned out to be, he might indeed lose track of his grammar just as Wordsworth artfully contrives to do here.

29 Wordsworth also seems to have forgotten that he was talking about children a moment ago; or else, the flowers are a metaphor for the children, who are thus “decking the matron temple” of Cambridge.

30 Obviously, this didn't stick.

To get distracted from remembering stuff,
And start thinking about boring things
That kids do, not strung out, calm.
There were *caves* in my mind that
Were really dark, but there were
Plenty of *woods* that
Weren't too dark.³¹ Peer-groups,
Friendships, acquaintances, were nice.
We walked, played, or acted-out; we talked
About stupid stuff in the morning;
Loitered in public,
Read stupid books in a lazy way, left town
To ride horses really really fast
And irresponsibly, or floated
In the River Cam in a boat, at
Night, without ever being calm.

That's what my second year at Uni
Was like. I didn't think about anything,
Except a little. I couldn't walk
On the grass where a lot of
Really smart blokes had walked too,
And still be bored. I couldn't constantly walk
Through the same gates, and in their beds,
Wake up in the same place, wander around the old fields,
That really great school, and be calm.
And not only that dark feeling
Of being special, but also that those perfect heroes,
Even Newton who was practically invisible,
Seemed almost normal here, so I
Liked them more. Since everyone knew they'd been here
(Just like how in pictures they wear
Regular clothes)
They seemed more middle-class and sentimental
And personal, even though
Everybody still thought they were really really great.

Next to Trompington Mill

31 Wordsworth's italics are very insistent about this metaphor, for whatever reason.

I pretended Chaucer was telling jokes under trees;
And heard him, while birds made noise, tell love
Stories. And that nice poet,
Who was really really good³²—
Spencer, seeming like he could fly
And pretty and slow like the moon is,
I called him Main Man, Limey, and Mate!
Oi, our blind poet,³³ who was lonely
When he was old; being a gadfly—
Blind, and having been in trouble earlier,
Really intense—I pretended he was here
And salt-of-the-earth, dressed like a student
Running around, still a kid—
A kid, not all that special, blushing
Like an angel, with good vision, brave-looking,
And good at walking like he was moral and proud.³⁴
Somebody I knew
Lived in the room
Milton used to. Oi, nice poet!
I admit, for the first time, that when I sat
In your innocent dorm room,³⁵
During a party, I poured some
Liquor, toasted you, drank until pride
And thankfulness got mixed up
Because I'd never gotten drunk
Before, or ever again. Then, I ran away
From them; in the streets,
Ran, like an ostrich, to get to church³⁶
On time,³⁷
But a long time after the bell

32 Wordsworth's idea of how "common men" would put this idea: "Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State".

33 Milton.

34 People who are proud and moral are better at knowing where they're walking, you see.

35 Wordsworth has suddenly mistaken you, the reader, for a long-dead, blind poet. No doubt another example of the plain speech of the common man.

36 Ostriches have a highly distinctive manner of running to church, apparently.

37 Wordsworth's straightforward, plain-speaking language is difficult to parse here: "In not a desperate or opprobrious time".

Rang, with tired Cassandra voice³⁸

Gone.

Oi, Remember it, Mate! For a second,

What church is like.

Being really cocky in

My robe, I cut in line

In front of boring businessmen, who watched

At the front,

By the organ. Dumb thoughts!

I'm ashamed of them: and that really good poet,

And you, Mate! Who because you're smart

Think I'm even cooler than I really am,

Sorry about doing that,

I was kind of a git,

Not for the only time.

Doing stuff like this

Time passed, irresponsibly, not because

I wanted to be bad,

Or to get a bad reputation, but because

I just couldn't be arsed, did what was easy, didn't

Try to do stuff that's hard—gave up caring about stuff,

But Nature, or good luck

Didn't make up for it.

I forgot stuff, felt

Tired during the day, and barely

Thought about stuff at all.³⁹

It's kinda like

A floating island, swampy

And sticky, spongy, but still

With pretty swamp-grass

And pretty flowers. Wanting to be famous,

And respecting dead people, seeing

The graveyards⁴⁰

38 It is unclear what Cassandra, the prophet who is not believed, has to do with the subject at hand, perhaps an allusion to Milton; it is even more unclear why her name is not in the possessive, or what other grammatical innovation Wordsworth had in mind.

39 In the original, Wordsworth slips here into sounding poetic; I have corrected this—no doubt unintentional—lapse into interesting language here.

40 Another unintentional lapse into poetry; these two lines offer a rather nice,

Where *smart* people were buried,
Has excited lots of kids, and made
Them love to work hard—
Crikey! Not me.
Nobody there could make me do
My homework, or make me feel
Bad about it, let alone make
Me actually study, and think really hard
About things that are really
Really hard. Really this wasn't their fault
But mine; I should, really,
Talking about me myself,
Be really wrong, if I said it wasn't:⁴¹
Because I, being outside a lot as a kid,
Was spoiled, and, running amok,
Like I did a lot
Where there were rivers around, and the sky,
And hills, pretending I was a bird,
I didn't like being inside;
To stop having fun, and, constantly,
Sit around
And behave. That pretty stuff
Used up almost my whole brain too,
Which, since I was born that way, thought
The things it liked were really great,
Really really great, better than anything.
I still read books—not to would be
Really dumb—but I liked other stuff better,
Lots better, which made me not want
To do my homework inside often enough,
Like I should at that age. Still, even though
I used to wander around a lot,
Reading whatever

if conventional, double-meaning between a Cambridge graveyard and a library. This is scarcely “the language really spoken by men” (who rarely confuse libraries with cemeteries). Fortunately, this oversight of Wordsworth disappears in translation into E-M-B-&-T.

41 Wordsworth's excessive punctuation makes this passage difficult to render in E-M-B-&-T; were we to remove it, lines 347-350 could be *semantically* simplified to four words: “It was my fault.” The latter three lines of the original text are entirely rhetorical, containing no information.

Was around,⁴² I could imagine someplace
(Unless I'm getting senile)⁴³
Where I would have worked hard
Right away; would have suddenly
Paid attention to science and art
And literature, really focused on it,
Honestly, just like
I did on Nature. Hard work
In that place, which was pretend,
Would be contagious; and serious clumps of trees,
Really great places, would be
Serious on the inside too.
The congregating⁴⁴ mood of
Kids, instead of going to waste, should be taught
How to want to do great stuff—
Stuff that they really want to do a lot.
Kids should be bowled over, totally excited
About how really great
Knowledge is, when someone really likes it
Just because they like it, and being famous,
As they work hard, and deserve
To be remembered later; should learn to take off
Her clothes,⁴⁵ should take them off and be embarrassed
In front of the olden times and the truth
And liking books a lot; and in all of it
Being really really simple is all that matters,
Polite boringness, whatever it's called,
Leftist⁴⁶ or religious.
If these thoughts

42 Or, as 'common men' would say, "Culling such flowers of learning as might tempt a random choice".

43 A distinct possibility.

44 Apparently, a "congregating temper" is such a perfect example of "common speech" that we find no corresponding word in E-M-B-&-T.

45 It seems to be Knowledge herself, from six clauses ago, who is stripping naked here so to be leered at by abstract concepts, for some reason.

46 "Republican" had a wide range of associations at the time of Wordsworth's writing, ranging from Liberal-centrist to Jacobin. However, few of Wordsworth's contemporaries, "common men" or otherwise, would have associated Republicanism with "sound simplicity" and "seemly plainness" in the wake of the French Revolution.

Are a pointless fantasy⁴⁷
That *makes fun* of the present day, then
Stupidity and Lying can pretend to have
Whichever kind of know-how⁴⁸
Will make them most stuck-up—
I don't care if they fuck up education,
But leave the Church alone. Has there ever been
A stupid shepherd who keeps making
Sheep go to a pool they hate even if they're not thirsty?
It's very shitty
To have a day like that.⁴⁹ Wisen up,
You Presidents and Deans, and, until the present
Is like the olden days, and kids are home-schooled
And pray a lot, shut up those damned
Bells, because they sound
More hollow than anything ever has before;⁵⁰
And your stuffy classes make the
Anglican Church look bad,
Which people, even in the boondocks,
Aren't attending enough. Even Science, too, next to it
Who can see this crap every day,
Is ruined and made gross,
Nobody listens to her, she falls under
Secondary mistrust, or is totally unknown.⁵¹
I could tell, and I admit,
That having had lots of fun
As a schoolboy at home, I'd made a pile
On top of the future,

47 Or as the common man would say, “a gratuitous emblazonry...”

48 This reconstruction of the line, “Whatever formal gait of discipline,” is tentative; it no longer rings as true of everyday speech as it apparently did in the workshops, farms and wharves that Wordsworth claimed to know so well.

49 We all have a “Crazy Shepherd Day” once in a while, eh?

50 Take that, bell!

51 Translation conjectural. Surprisingly, I have had trouble finding any common man able to parse this rustic anecdote about Science and the Church being defiled by boring classwork. Presumably in Wordsworth's day the country tavern would often ring a-nights with such quaint, vernacular phrases as, “smitten thence with an unnatural taint, / Loses her authority, falls beneath / Collateral suspicion, else unknown.”

Which fell apart.⁵² Crikey, it's great
To see a place for young British people
So awesome that it
Can't be made less awesome; an old clump of trees
Where, even though people were happy in the dark,
And people sang a lot
Under bushes, still the place's
Face should look intimidated;
A quiet, serious place to live
For people who thought a lot; a place
For quiet stuff to walk around in; a place
Where heron should want to eat
Next to the rivers, and pelicans
On cyprus trees can feel put-upon
While sitting in the sun.—Shit! Shit!
I couldn't find anyone that serious;
There were butterflies everywhere, and annoying
Know-it-all chatterboxes; their inner souls
Seemed shallow, and the outside
Too flashy.

That's not
What old professors saw in the olden days,
When everyone here
Worked really hard;
When, stuck in boring and crowded
Rooms, they read books
Like caterpillars eating their cocoons
Quietly, or really noisily
But not hunted or being embryos.⁵³ Back then politicians
Prayed in the morning, and slept at bed-time,
Since church and chores made them like
Being hungry, working all the time, and boring clothes.
Hell yeah, I love that place! So famous!⁵⁴
Back in that boring time school was different

52 It's unclear precisely what material Wordsworth had made a pile *of* on top of the future. I have my own guesses.

53 Wordsworth here makes the faux-pas of becoming linguistically interesting, slipping accidentally into Poetic language: "with keen devouring noise / Not to be tracked or fathered." It was probably the printer's fault or something. I have attempted to correct the mistake for him.

54 Still talking about Cambridge, in case you've zoned out for a few pages.

For students
Right from the start: in that really awesome time
When Smartness, like a guy on vacation,
Played a horn really loud to Christians, and woke up
Some farmers and the king; when little boys, who grew
Up in crappy little towns in dumb houses,
Ran away, and, wandering around looking
For work, or a famous school or someplace cool,
Where, with an allowance, they could sit in the shade,
Wandered around
Carrying big books;
And lots of times, running out of someplace secret,
Waved at some total stranger,
Yelling, "An obolus,⁵⁵ gimme money
Since I read alot!" –when famous people,
Not liars, flat broke,
Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon,⁵⁶ read
Near their doors or windows
With the moon since there were no candles apparently.⁵⁷

But I can't help all that! We barely know
What already happened, and cool stuff
Isn't so perfect that it
Always, like everyone says,
Has to be perfect. If the sailor,
When he's sulking over passing up
A fun island, knew how much shit
Would have gone down if he'd gone
There,
He'd want to say thank you to the big waves
That kept him away, or the wind
That was bad: I don't feel sorry
For myself; Teenagers like me are lucky,
If they're at least as lucky as me, and aren't
More unlucky.

I didn't like,

55 Since Wordsworth is a champion of "everyday speech," I assume there is no need to define this everyday word.

56 All of them everyday blokes, as we know.

57 It is unclear why they lack candles.

And maybe I was right, how easy
School was; I wanted
It more like a big river
Going slower; but I more really, really sad
To see a few intense teens,
Who were good at stuff,
But were pricks although kids should be nice
And happy, got the short end of the stick,
When that pissed off, no matter how good they do.⁵⁸
Instead I hung out with people
Who were not as smart, with soft
Brains; but I still didn't want friendship that makes
us take things easy, when we don't think about the future,
And we forget the stuff
We really planned to do.

But my vacation from smart people wasn't
A total waste of time. Before
I felt shy,
(or so people say,)
Like a shepherd on a mountain,
Who is bored and looks at
The ocean, but makes it up more
Than he actually sees it. And let me tell you,
Switching from kids' games
And taking lots of walks
To stuff that's kinda like
Doing real stuff, a special place
That's inside a bigger place,
A house for teens
With imagery that gets in the way,⁵⁹
Jived better with my amazing brain-powers,
Lots better, than if I'd just run away,
Without any plan or job
In the real world;

58 I have struggled to preserve the garbled grammar of the original in my translation.

59 Or, as the common man of Wordsworth's day would apparently say, "With all its intervenient imagery". Oddly, translation into E-M-B-&-T is difficult without lapsing into Philosophical language.

Little by little I got
Better at stuff; grew up easier,
To have for good later, better pay-off,
Of smarts and morality, to come out of it.⁶⁰
When I was serious, but mainly, I admit,
When I was in a looney mood, we⁶¹ noticed
(We couldn't not) the habits
Of the people that got noticed
For being good or bad; or⁶² the people
Who shared interests with us
So we knew them, people whose influence
And power made
Us nervous, and that's all.
We didn't want to do cool stuff like that,
Which was all over the place, but especially among
The old guys, who were dirty, with ugly
Personalities, decorated like old trees
That are so sick they
Let any other plant that wants
Grow on them.

When I saw them, seeing really well
Those shepherds I'd just left
Seemed a different part of being old;⁶³
Really different! But both stood out,
Things people are supposed to notice,
Or specially-made portraits,
You'd almost think with some of them, they're so good
At being pictures in the textbook that Nature uses—
The one she holds up like a Mom
When she wants
To teach stuff in fun ways,

60 The syntax is equally ambiguous in the original.

61 There is no indication of why Wordsworth suddenly lurches into the plural pronoun here, nor whether he is speaking of unmentioned friends or is using the 'royal "we",' as in: "My genius and I noticed..."

62 One might expect an 'and' here; perhaps Wordsworth was uncertain which he had noticed, since surely he cannot be making recourse to the poetic license sometimes accorded to these conjunctions in 18th and 19th Century poetics, which he so despised.

63 Here again, the syntax in the original Boring-and-Trite seems garbled.

And mix playtime with thinking about sad stuff.

The shallow stuff rich people do
And good manners, special kinds
Of colours, hiding, shiny
On the official silk curtains with gold on them;
This dodgy combination of snaky colours,
Whether a secret or not,
I didn't give a shit about; and since there
Wasn't any here, I took the cheap cloth
I found.⁶⁴ Today
I smile, on lots of mountains
Remembering stuff as different in personality
Traits, as ignorant,
As puppets⁶⁵ at
A funeral or fair. Lots of times I
Remember old guys—
Funny ones, who are dead,
And even though I almost forgot
Their names, they've become ghosts stuck
Between the real world and fantasy.⁶⁶

I'm wasting time: you just need to know
That these were little versions
Of the wide world; its fights
Had less important versions here,⁶⁷ like play-fighting,

64 It is uncertain what the hell Wordsworth is on about here.

65 Or, as in Wordsworth's *Common Speech*, "As aught by wooden images performed".

66 Wordsworth made a grave error here, accidentally using language in a striking way: "into phantoms passed / Of texture midway between life and books." I have been only partially able to render it sufficiently banal.

67 The rather complex relationship that Wordsworth has in mind unfortunately could not be expressed in B-&-T, and Wordsworth was stuck with "Collaterally portrayed" (sic). The idea is even more inexpressible in E-M-B-&-T. It would be a fascinating study for some aspiring graduate student, why Wordsworth did not opt for suppressing the idea itself, rather than including, against his own programme, this bit of precise, intellectual language. One might think that an idea that cannot be expressed in Boring-and-Trite would provide a strong argument for the use of that language, which Wordsworth opposed. Indeed, it can only be assumed that the systematic exclusion from the poem of any idea that demanded the use of a

Lots of punches, some almost hard
As real ones; and whatever
You think about this stuff would be
Interesting to some yokel, more
Or less, I saw—
But maybe all that stuff I saw should have
A better name, not fake,
But a cool part of a whole cool thing,
A creek in the big ocean;⁶⁸ since, all amounts,
And kinds of flash-in-the-pan fame
Were in charge here, and gave hand-outs to
Henchmen who used to be good guys;
And those other blokes, who actually have jobs; Hope,
That doesn't think about if things are worth the work;
Laziness stopping in his tired shoe,
And poor gullible Shame, and stupid Fear,
And boring Pleasure cooking for Death;
Honour missing, and Dignity lost;
Bickering, cliques, suck-ups, peevishness, and tricks,
Sore losers, and government by bastards,
(Just as weak as the people who voted for them),
And Moral Values and Tradition starving Truth,
And bullies in power spanking
The kid that could have told him what to do; Emptiness
Followed around like a good sign, and shy Value
Left alone and really obscure.

Out of all that stuff I've been blathering on about
I really don't know how much is really
Stuff I actually remember,
And how much I made up
Later.⁶⁹ But happiness
That, in a nice boy like me asleep,

specialised, Poetic or Philosophical language is the reason that the poem consists so completely of self-evident truisms, banal tangents, and artfully placed, meaningless inanities.

68 This is literally impossible, and an absurd poetic image. A creek, by definition, is shaped by the banks of earth around it; it cannot have the ocean for its shore.

69 This admission raises more self-evident questions than a footnote can even introduce...

Is what makes being innocent worth it,
I had lots of that. I wandered around pointlessly
Like in a big museum and from all their cool things
You notice something
And look at it a little, then go on
To other stuff, then more stuff after that;
Until there's so much stuff
That doesn't belong together,
You get confused;⁷⁰
And even though it's painful and empty
Happy confusion mostly,
And not many smart desires or love,
But stuff sticks to the memory anyway,
That I can learn from later.

That's how by being passive and lazy, dude!
The hard-working time of fall, winter, spring,
Eight months! passed; after that
I had to go home.

Thus Ends the Third Part.

70 Note how deftly Wordsworth echoes this confusion in the ludicrous syntax of this sentence, where he wobbles erratically between extended metaphor, vague psychological speculation, and semi-senile reminiscence, all delivered in the straightforward, salt-of-the-earth simplicity of common speech, such as: “Yet to the memory something cleaves at last / Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.”

THE PRELUDE

of **William Wordsworth**, as
Translated into EVEN-MORE-BORING-&-TRITE
BY **FAST SEDAN NELLSON, ESQ.**
Translator Extraordinaire!

"At long last, a translation of our Great *English* Poet
Laureate® that offers due *homage* to his lofty **genius!**"

-Sir Gladinstock Mugginsonton IV, Upper-Class Twit.

"Wordsworth was not aware of the *irritation* and **disgust**
which he had founded in the minds of his friends. But there
were other manifestations of the same ungenial and
exclusive *pride*, even still more **offensive...**"

-Thomas de Quincey, a drug-addled Leftist.

"Wordsworth is a most *unpleasant* companion in a tour,
from his terrible fear of being **cheated.**"

-Hartley Coleridge, his best friend's son.

"Words'erth? 'o's 'at then?"

-Bob Grubbiwit, son of Tom the Pig-tussler.

"He does not understand a *joke*, but requires it to be
explained; after which he looks **uneasy.**"

-Richard H. Horne, a flippant fop.

"Southey and **Turdsworth** such renegado rascals."

-George Gordon, Lord Byron, a decadent ne'er-do-well.

* * *

**Currently in serial publication in 14 volumes by
Monocle-Lash Anti-Press**



**printers of many fine and worthy writings,
poetical and philosophical. A.Da. 100.**